

Rural Tribal Transportation in New Mexico

**ZEE Inc. Public Transportation
Program**



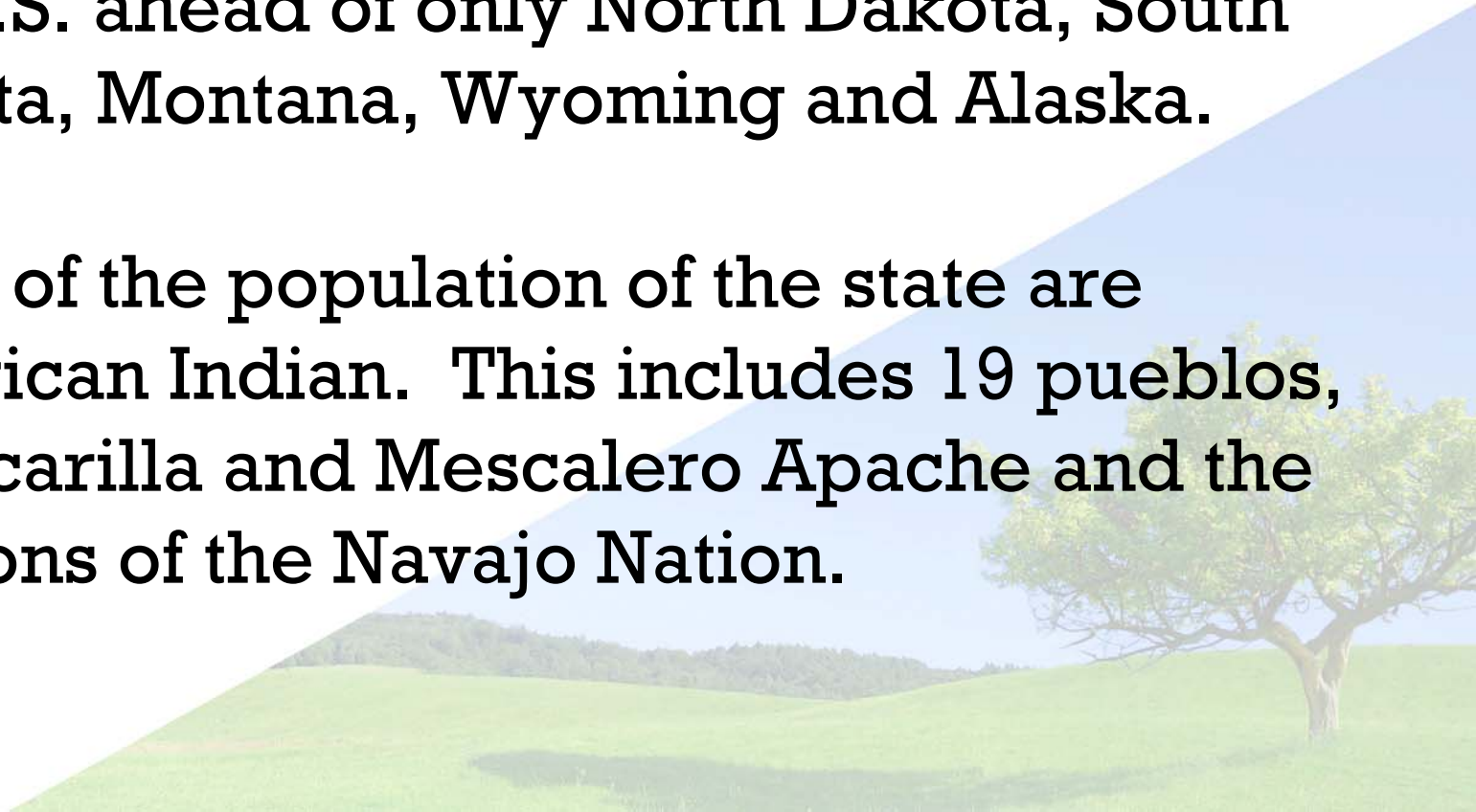
New Mexico Facts and Figures

- New Mexico is by in large a rural state covering in excess of 121,000 square miles .
- A current population approximating 1.9 million persons.
- A culturally diverse state with significant Hispanic and American Indian



New Mexico Facts and Figures

- The state has a per square mile population density of only 16 persons (ranked 45th in the U.S. ahead of only North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Alaska.
- 9.8% of the population of the state are American Indian. This includes 19 pueblos, the Jicarilla and Mescalero Apache and the portions of the Navajo Nation.



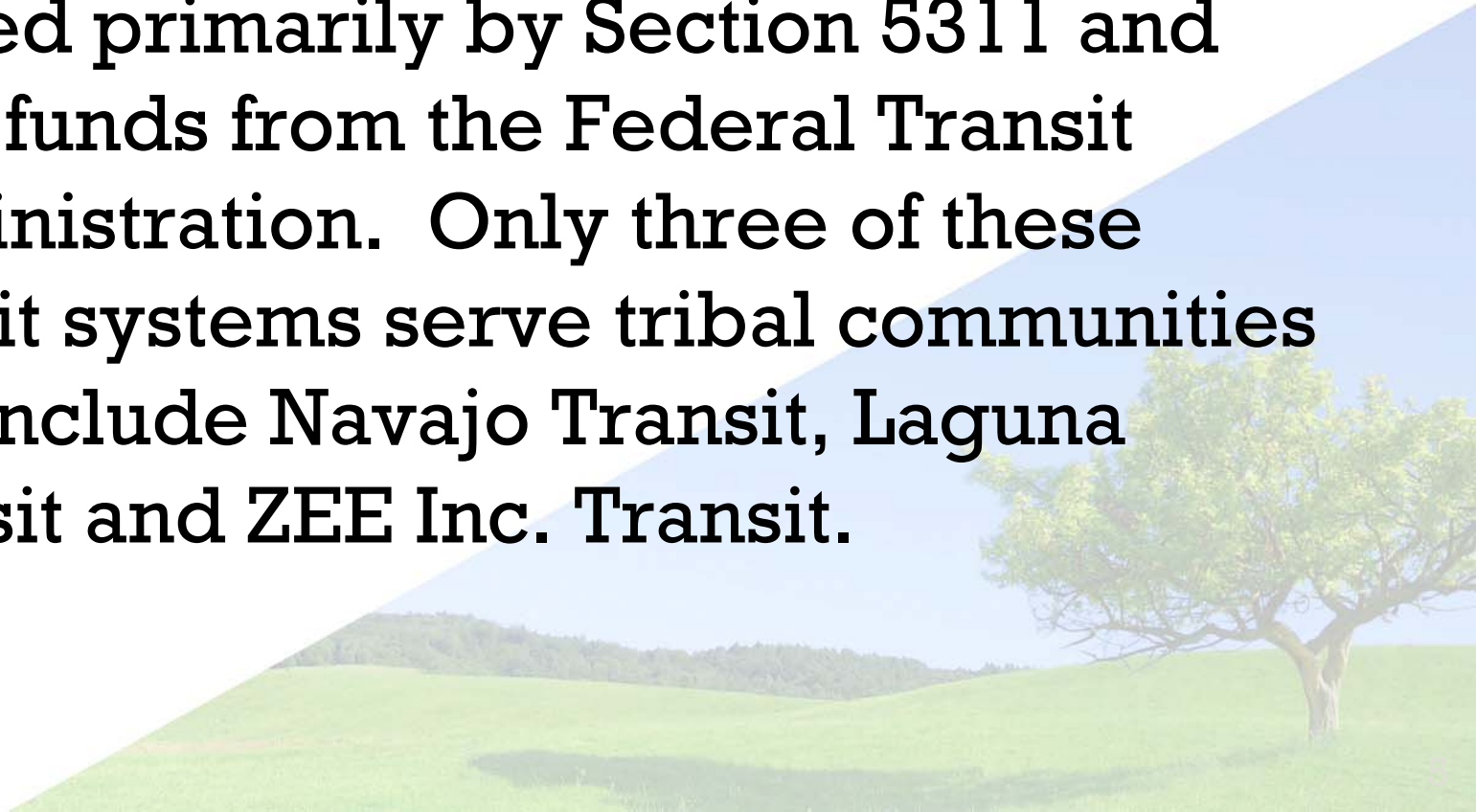
New Mexico Facts and Figures

- There are only three urban communities in the state, Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Las Cruces. These cities comprise almost 1/3 of the state's total population.
- These three urban centers accounted for ridership of 10,896,705 in FY 2007. (84.45% of all rides provided in FY 2007).



New Mexico Rural Transportation

- There are currently 24 rural public transit providers operating in the state funded primarily by Section 5311 and 5309 funds from the Federal Transit Administration. Only three of these transit systems serve tribal communities and include Navajo Transit, Laguna Transit and ZEE Inc. Transit.



New Mexico Rural Transportation

- During the period October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2008, rural transit programs in New Mexico were funded at the level of \$13,473,925. \$8,461,059 received from Section 5311 and 5309 federal dollars and \$5,012,866 in local matching funds.



New Mexico Rural Transportation

- These systems provided 814,373 passenger trips in FY 2007. This equates just over 6% of the 12 million + rides provided by all transit systems in New Mexico.
- These transit systems provided these services with no state funds provided to support public transportation. This places all of the matching requirement burden on the transit systems and the communities served. 37% of the total funding indicated comes from local resources.

The Pueblo of Zuni

- Is the largest of the nineteen pueblos in the state with a population of 12,069 persons and a reservation area covering 463,300 acres (724 square miles).
- The pueblo is remote and isolated from the mainstream culture of the state located 150 miles from Albuquerque, 200 miles from the state capital of Santa Fe and 45 miles from the nearest city of Gallup.



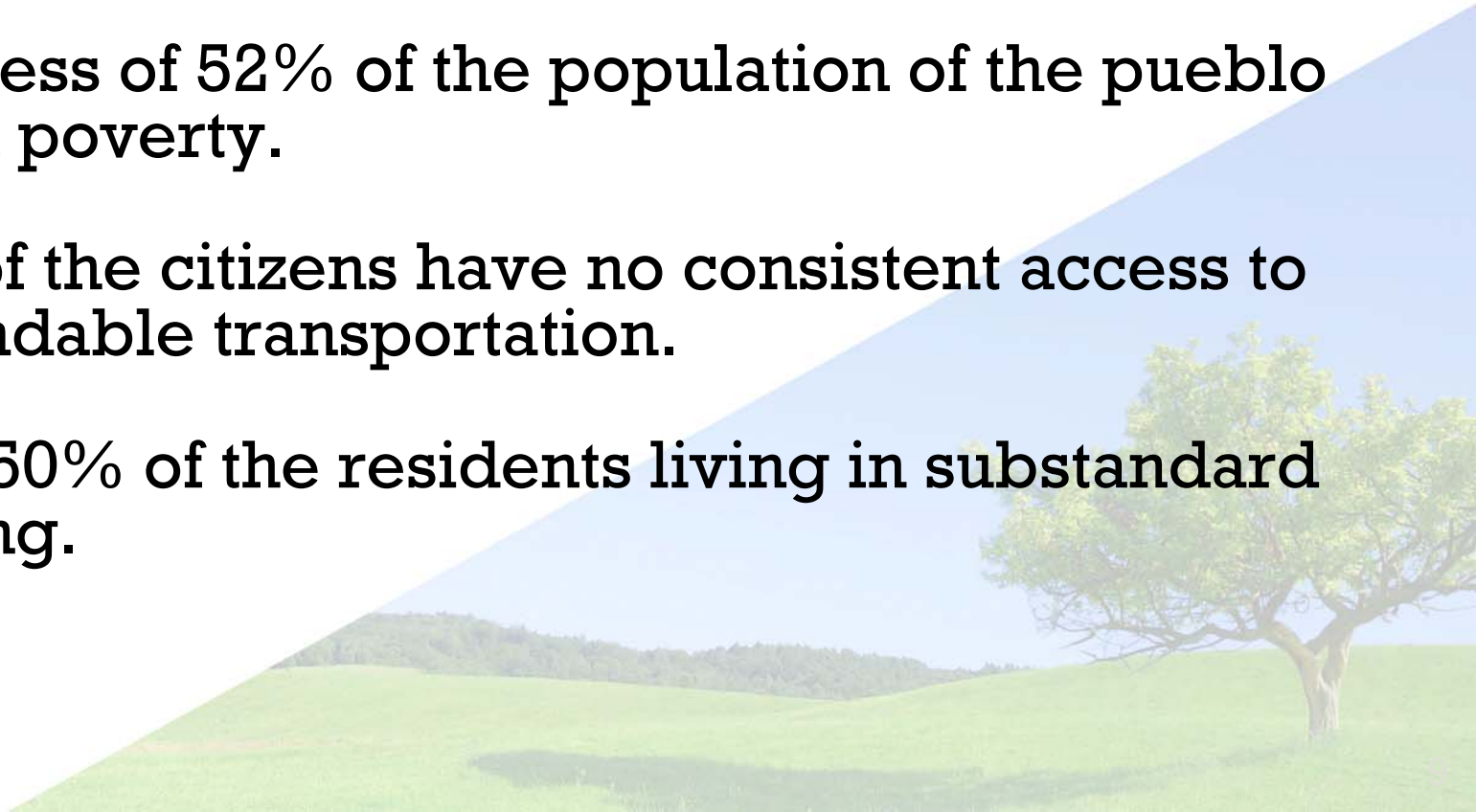
Pueblo of Zuni

The unemployment rate consistently exceeds 60% of the workforce each year.

In excess of 52% of the population of the pueblo live in poverty.

25% of the citizens have no consistent access to dependable transportation.

Over 50% of the residents living in substandard housing.



Challenges

This environment creates a number of significant challenges to effectively serving the transportation needs of a remote and rural tribal community. These include:

Remoteness of the pueblo from other areas of the state.

Distances required be traveled to connect the community members with employment opportunities, education and health care outside of the reservation. Many tribal residents travel daily to Gallup for employment and education. A round trip distance of 90 miles.

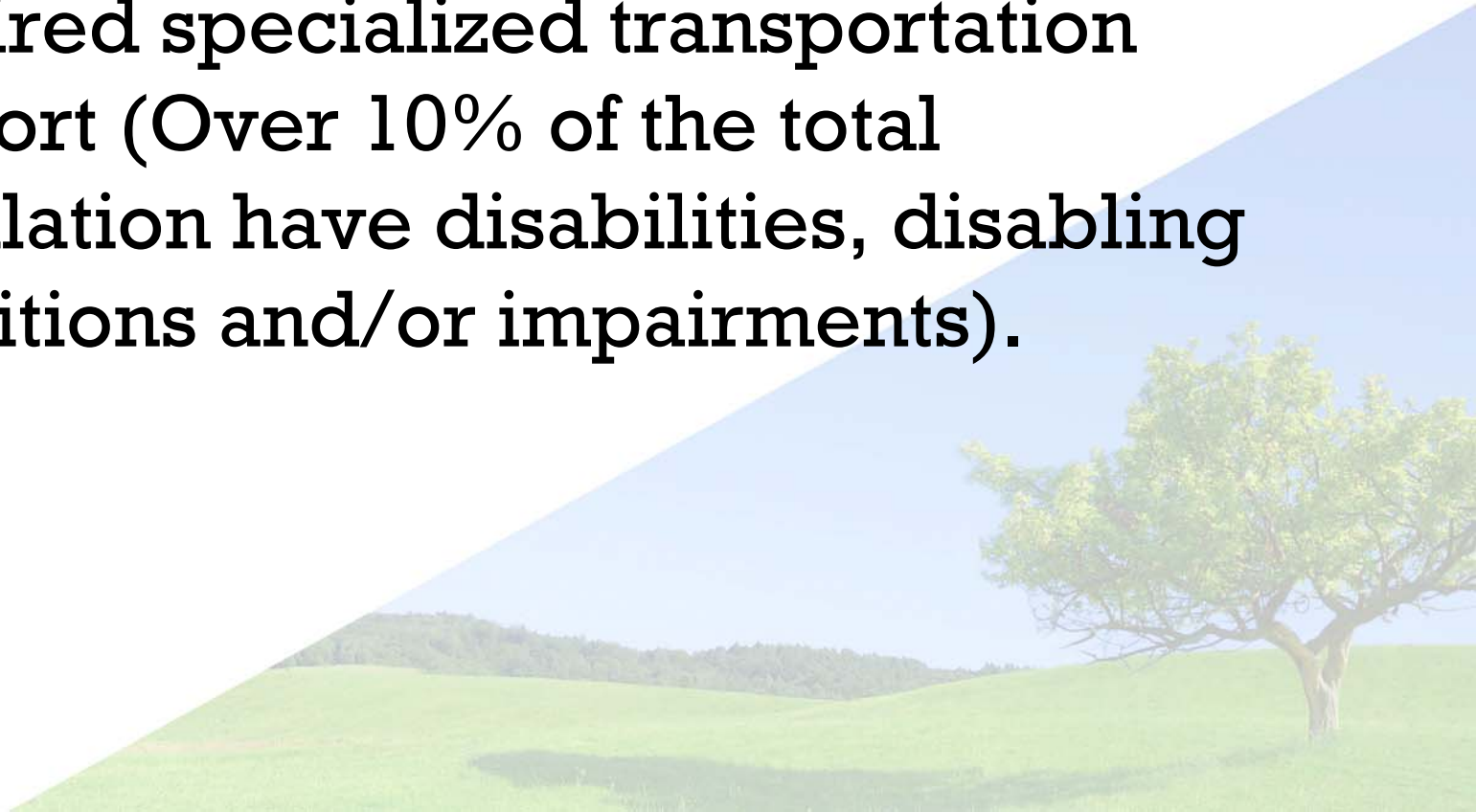
Challenges

- Significant poverty limits the level of fares for services.
- A limited availability of local match to support the program. (The most significant match issue is for operating costs. Local entities are required to match 50% of these costs).



Challenges

- increased number of persons with disabilities and mobility impairments required specialized transportation support (Over 10% of the total population have disabilities, disabling conditions and/or impairments).



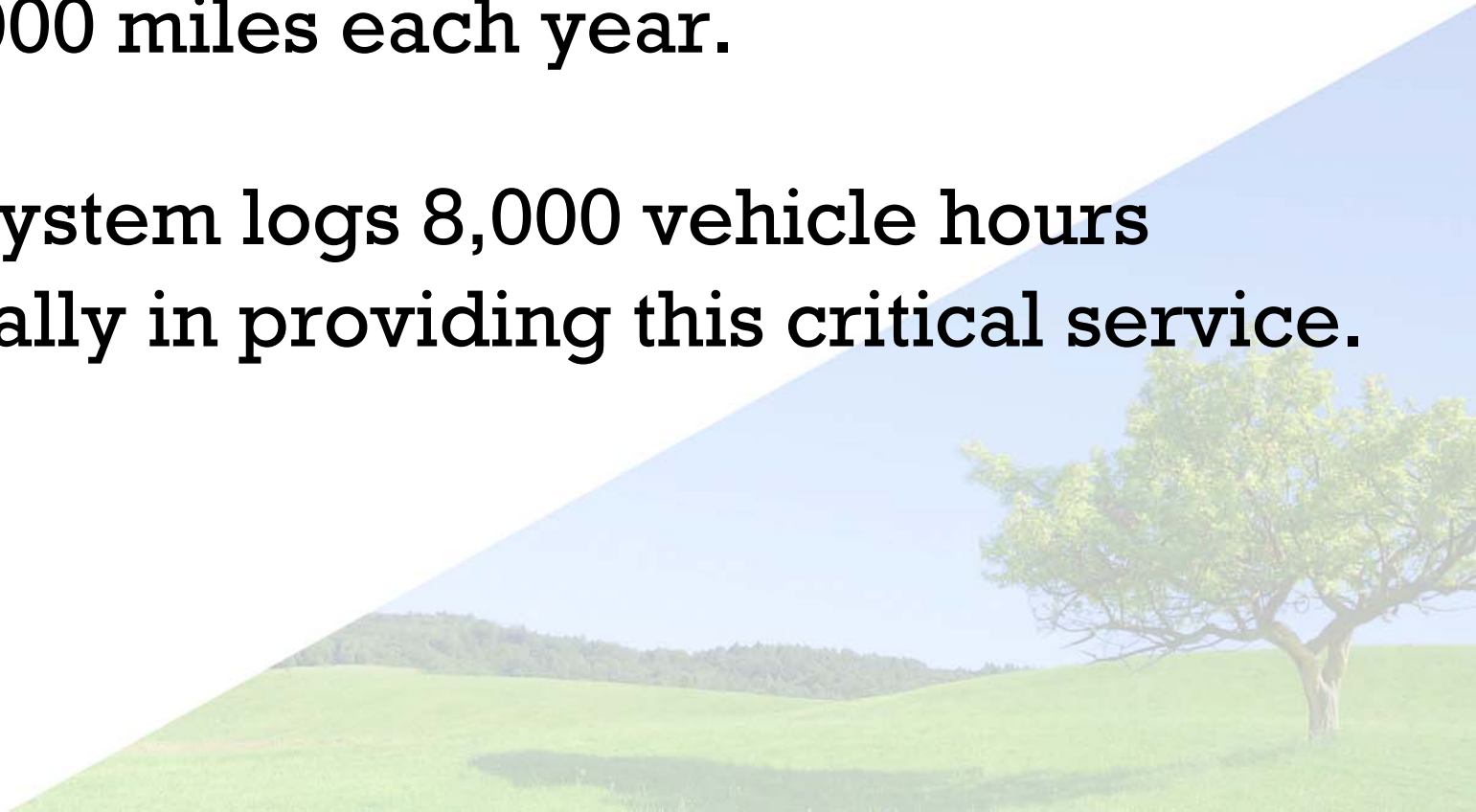
ZEE Inc. Public Transportation

ZEE Inc. began a public transportation system in 1994 to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities and the community as a whole.

This initiative received funding from the Section 5311 Rural and Small Urban program of the Federal Transit Administration, the JOBLINKS initiative of the Community Transportation Association of America and the Job Access Reverse Commute program of the Federal Transit Administration. This funding gave the agency the capacity to meet transportation needs of this community.

ZEE Inc. Public Transportation

- The transportation program currently provides 50,000 trips and travels over 225,000 miles each year.
- The system logs 8,000 vehicle hours annually in providing this critical service.



ZEE Inc. Public Transportation

Current operational costs show:

Average cost per trip \$2.75

.25 trips per vehicle mile

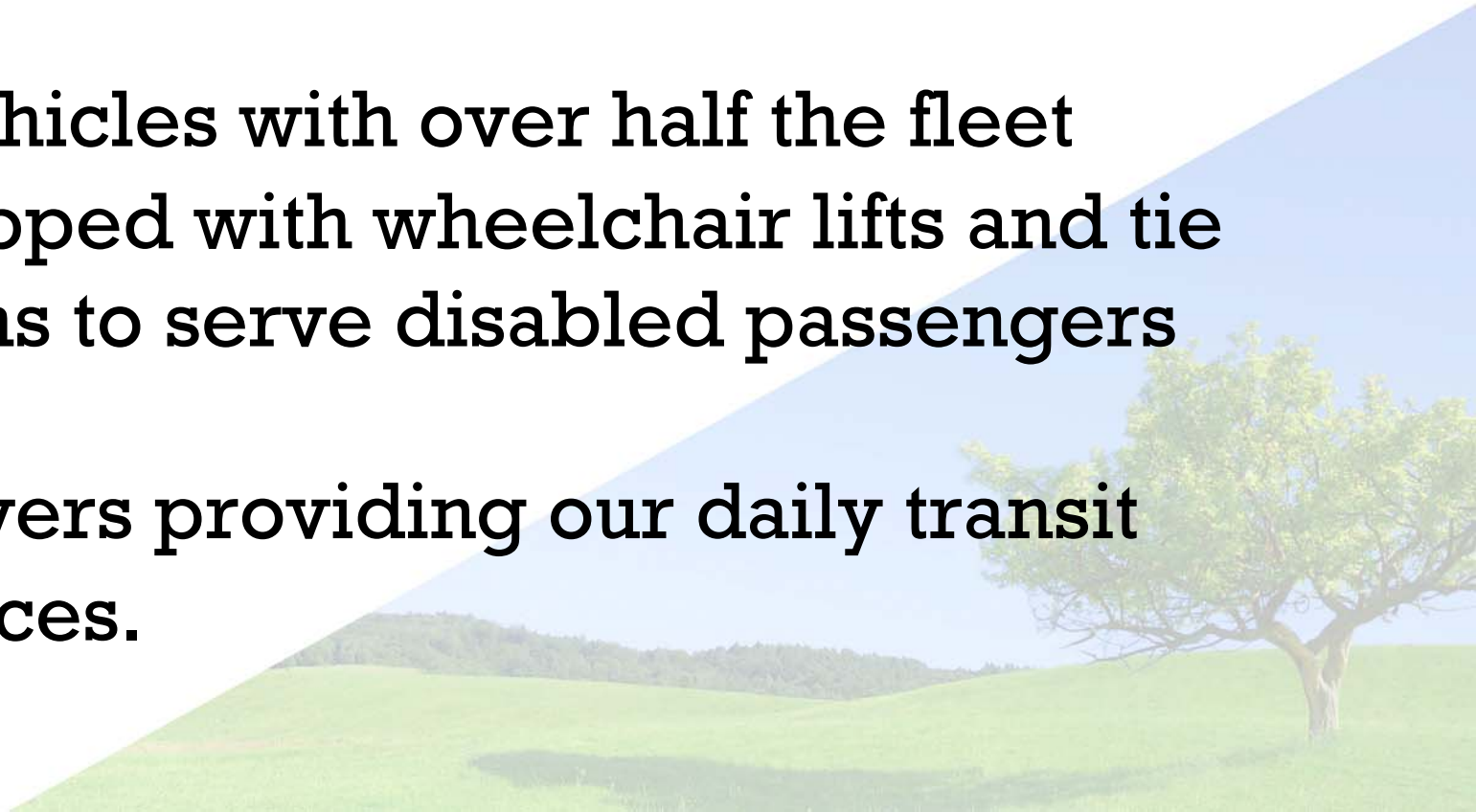
5.75 trips per hour

\$15.80 per vehicle hour



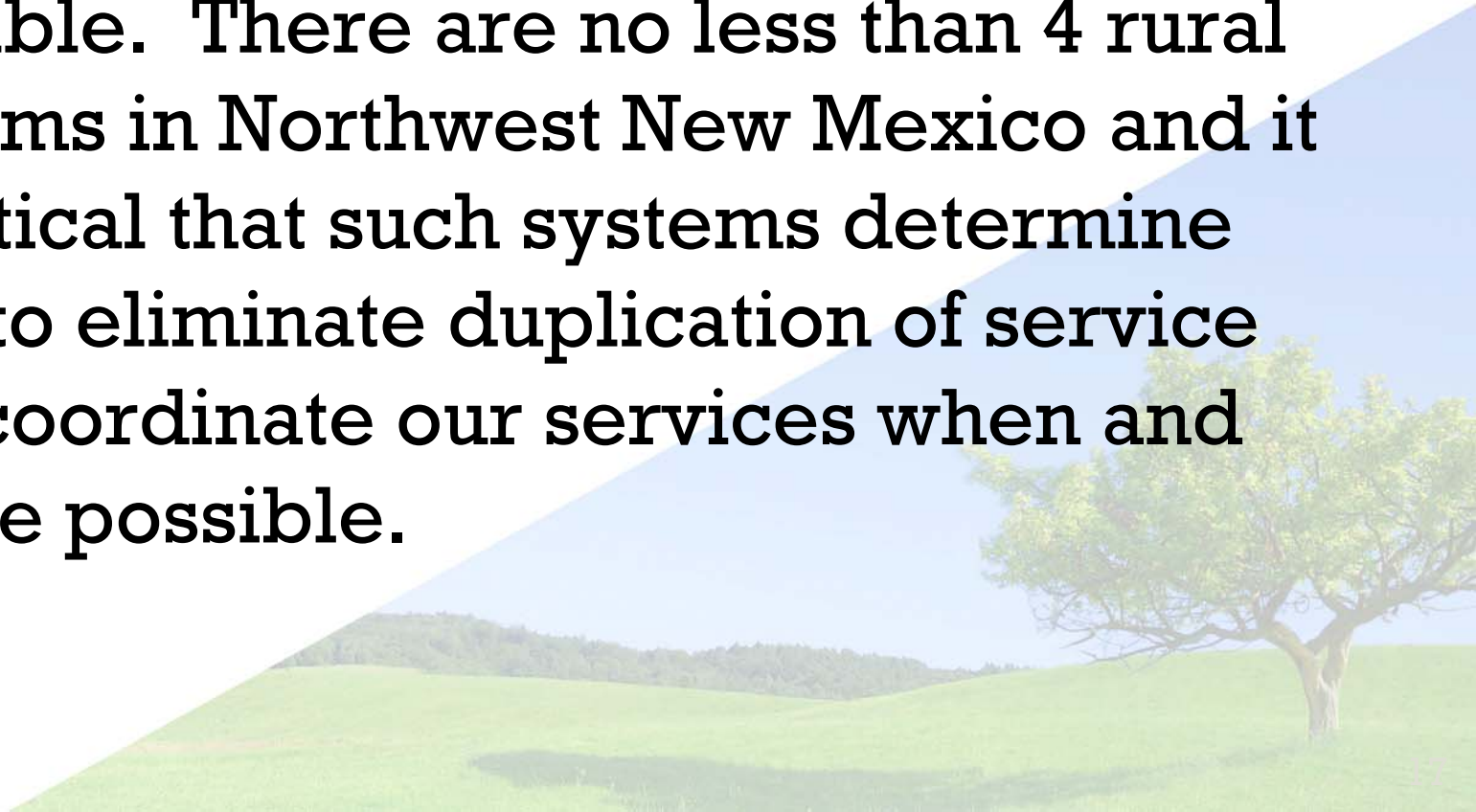
ZEE Inc. Public Transportation

- Our capacity to serve the transit needs of the Pueblo of Zuni include:
- 15 vehicles with over half the fleet equipped with wheelchair lifts and tie downs to serve disabled passengers
- 7 drivers providing our daily transit services.



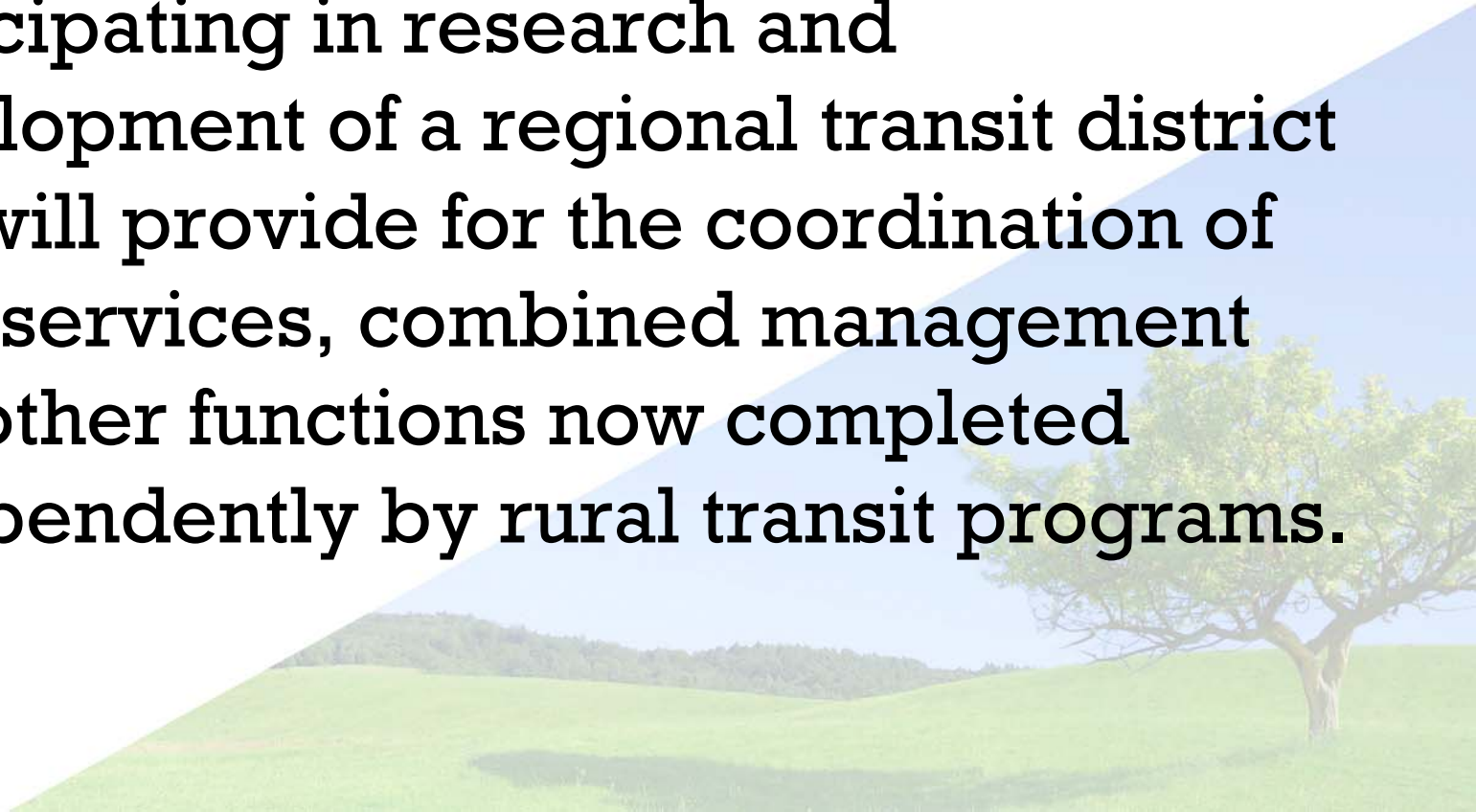
Alternatives for Rural Transit

- Coordinating services with other rural transit providers to the maximum extent possible. There are no less than 4 rural systems in Northwest New Mexico and it is critical that such systems determine how to eliminate duplication of service and coordinate our services when and where possible.



Planning For the Future

- In order to meet the continuing growing need for transportation, we are currently participating in research and development of a regional transit district that will provide for the coordination of such services, combined management and other functions now completed independently by rural transit programs.



Conclusion

- Public transportation is a critical component of the infrastructure of rural communities in New Mexico and a comprehensive strategy to maintain and enhance such systems must be part of the long term planning of those rural communities. It is key to economic development, community growth and quality of life in New Mexico.

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